

NEWS SNAPS



PHOTO: STAR

Minister for Environment and Forestry Shahjahan Siraj inaugurating an afforestation campaign at the Islamic University campus recently.

Ultimatum to evict thieves from Jahanpur

UNB, Sunamganj Enraged by unabated stealing, inhabitants of 27 villages in Dirai upazila Monday gave local administration a 10-day ultimatum to crack down on thieves. Thousands of angry villagers led by Rajanagar union parisad (UP) chairman Abdai Mia gathered at Rajanagar Bazaar and urged the administration to evict the thieves from Jahanpur, known as the village of thieves, by 10 days. Earlier in 2000, the villagers set fire to the houses of the thieves at the village.

Juba Dal factional clash leaves 7 injured

UNB, Magura At least seven people were injured in a clash between two factions of Juba Dal in Siripur upazila headquarters Monday. Police said the clash was a sequel to a longstanding conflict between upazila Juba Dal president SM Selim and secretary Minto Chowdhury. Selim was among the injured. Police arrested a man in this connection. A case was filed.

People catch two alleged snatchers

UNB, Brahmanbaria Local people caught two alleged snatchers from Puniat rail gate area in the town while fleeing with valuables from two train passengers Sunday. Witnesses said Hiran Mia, 20, and Dhanu Mia, 22, snatched valuables, including cash and wrist watches, from the two train passengers early in the morning. As the passengers cried out for help, local people chased the hijackers and caught them red-handed. They were handed over to police.

Villagers capture four alleged pirates

UNB, Jhalakati Villagers caught four alleged pirates along with a trawler from Kikainagar in Sadar upazila Saturday. They caught the four men -- Abdul Majid, 40, Abdul Barek, 38, Anwar Hossain, 35, and Rubel, 26, -- while preparing to commit a robbery. They were handed over to police after a mass beating.

Snatcher gets 2-year RI in Habiganj

UNB, Habiganj A speedy trial court here Monday sentenced a man to two years rigorous imprisonment (RI) in a snatching case. The convict was identified as Rajab Ali, 25, of Borochar village in Sadar upazila. The case history in brief: Rajab Ali swooped on Sirajul Islam, manager of Shakil Enterprise in Shaestabazaar, and looted Tk 4,000 from the cash box of the office as he refused to give him Tk 20,000 as toll on June 28. Sirajul later filed a case against Rajab under the Speedy Trial Act. After examining the records and witnesses, the court found Rajab guilty of snatching and handed down the punishment.

Flood death toll rises to 7 in Gaibandha

KM REZAUL HAQUE, Gaibandha

Seven persons including three children drowned in the flood water. Two persons namely Ashraf Ali, 12 and Liton, 13 of Falia Sadar upazila drowned in flood water, with intense current while they were fishing. Chairman of Darbasia union in Gobindaganj upazila Tajmur Rahman informed that three children remain missing in different areas of his union two girls also remain missing while playing with flood water at Fulchhari upazila. Cracks have developed along the national highway at Gobindaganj due to erosion of the Karotoa. Road communication between Bogra and Rangpur may be snapped at any moment. One 33000 KV tower of power supply at Katakhal in Gobindaganj upazila fell into the Karotoa after being hit by erosion which caused suspension of power supply for 16 hours. Fulchhari upazila headquarters has gone under knee-deep water while Fulchhari market is now under four to five feet deep water. Road communication network has been collapsed in the affected areas. The flood situation in Gaibandha deteriorated further as fresh areas are being inundated each and every day.

A total 70 unions out of 82 are now in grip of flood. Onrush of water through breaches of the flood control embankment has inundated a vast tract of land. On Monday the people of Gaibandha cut off a portion of the flood control embankment at Chuniakandi in Sadar upazila to prevent the gushing water from entering the district town. According to the district administration over six lakh people have been marooned in the district by flood water. About 23,000 dwelling houses and 71 kilometres embankment have been affected badly by flood water. Standing crops on 6,000 hectares of land, aman seedlings on 2000 hectares and vegetable on 1500 hectares of land have been damaged completely. Crisis of food and drinking water is acute in the flood affected areas as all the tube-wells have gone under water. A railway bridge over the Bangali at Dewantola near Mohimaganj Station is being threatened. Railway high officials, meanwhile, visited the spot and necessary measures are being taken for smooth railways communication.



PHOTO: STAR

A flood affected sugarcane field at Gobindaganj upazila in Gaibandha. The flood situation deteriorated further in the northern district recently.

Hospitals sick in 16 districts of N region

UNB, Rajshahi

Lack of doctors, medicine and other facilities in hospitals of 16 northern districts is depriving millions of people of health service. Official sources said there are 392 healthcare centres under Health Department in the 16 districts where 783 posts of doctors are lying vacant. Of the vacancies, 38 are in Rajshahi, 83 in Naogaon, 47 in Panchagarh, 31 in Chapainawabganj, 30 in Natore, 51 in Pabna, 56 in Sirajganj, 31 in Thakurgaon, 72 in Dinajpur, 49 in Nilphamari, 34 in Rangpur, 64 in

Gaibandha, 71 in Kurigram, 51 in Bogra and 75 in Joypurhat. The healthcare centres can hardly provide medicine to the patients although they receive funds from the government for this purpose. Of the centres, only 78 have X-ray machines and of those 20 are now out of order. Besides, ambulances of 59 healthcare centres have long been lying inoperative. According to officials, nine posts of class II employees, 685 of class III and 201 of class IIII employees are lying vacant in Rajshahi alone.

5 BNP leaders expelled in Netrakona

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Netrakona

Netrakona district BNP on Saturday expelled five local BNP leaders. In a press conference on Saturday evening at the Netrakona Press Club, president and secretary of the local unit of the ruling party Ashrafuddin Khan and Abu Tahar Talukdar claimed that the expelled leaders broke discipline of the party. They also said that the expelled leaders created a reign of terror in Netrakona. The expelled leaders are : Abdul Mannal Talukder vice president of Netrakona district BNP, Khairul Haque Khasru, joint-secretary of Netrakona district BNP, Imran Khan Chowdhury, joint-secretary of Netrakona district BNP, Shafiqui Kader Suja, office secretary of Netrakona district BNP, Kamal Ahamed-economic secretary of Netrakona district BNP.

Behula's village neglected

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Sirajganj

Behula Sundori is a legendary figure in the Indo-Bangla-Pak sub-continent. During the period of the first half of the 18th century, Behula was born at Binsara village in Tarash upazila situated in the Chalan Beel area. Her father's name was Bashu Bania. At present no member of the Behula family is alive here. Though it is a place of historical importance, yet it remains neglected for long. Only one well of Behula's house exists now. A high school has been established here. The legendary big boat by which she used to move here and there is now under the earth. A number of visitors come here to have a glimpse of Behula's house. Here is a legend that a fair was held under the initiative of Lakkhindor at village Bostul near Binsara. Behula went to the fair to buy some of her favourite things.

Lakkhindor happened to meet her in the fair and was charmed to see her unparalleled beauty. There developed an intimacy between them. Lakkhindor came back to his home at Bogra and engaged match maker to marry her. Behula Sundori agreed to Lakkhindor's proposal and their marriage ceremony was solemnised in a befitting manner. After the marriage Lakkhindor took his newly married wife Behula to his Mohastangar residence where he created a bridal chamber. There a poisonous snake bit Lakkhindor inside the bridal chamber, Later on Lakkhindor's body was set for an unknown destination through a raft. Afterwards Behula Sundori came back to her parent's house. In her father's village she used to move here and there by a big boat through a canal which flows beside Ranirhat village. Hundreds of acres of land in the Chalan Beel area are situated on both sides of this canal.

Locals informed this correspondent that a big amount of fund is allocated regularly to excavate this canal every year, but unfortunately the persons concerned responsible to do the work misappropriate the fund without any work. Official sources said a total Tk 40 lakh was sanctioned recently by the government to re-excavate the canal, but no work was done and the entire allotted money was misappropriated. It is worth mentioning that if the canal is re-excavated properly production of crops especially of paddy will be increased. The place is situated in the Chalan Beel area which is a paddy producing area. Meanwhile, no development work has been done so far to preserve the golden memory of Behula Sundori. The authorities concerned are urged to take note of it make arrangements to develop and turn the place into a forward place.

Bumper output of jute a bane for growers?

MD ALIMUZZAMAN MIAH, Gopalganj

A bumper production of jute was achieved this year in five upazilas in Gopalganj due to favourable climatic condition. But the jute growers were being deprived of fair price of their produce due to lack of buyers. A total of 5767 hectares of land was brought under jute cultivation with a production target of 40,370 bales. Of those, 5417 hectares of land were brought under Tosha variety and 350 hectares under local variety, according to the Department of Agriculture Extension (DAE) sources. The upazila-wise break-up is in Gopalganj Sadar upazila a total of 920 hectares was brought under jute cultivation. Of the total, Tosha variety of jute was cultivated on 700 hectares and local variety was cultivated on 220 hectares. The production target was 6440 bales. In Kasiani upazila jute was cultivated on 1091 hectares. Out of this Tosha variety was cultivated on 1061 hectares and local variety on 30 hectares with a production target of 7,637 bales. In Muksudpur upazila jute was cultivated on 3,520 hectares of land, of which Tosha variety was cultivated on 3,470 hectares and local variety 50 hectares with a production target of 24,640 bales. In Kotalipara upazila jute was cultivated on 25 hectares, of which Tosha variety was cultivated on 10 hectares and local variety on 15 hectares with a

production target of 176 bales. In Tungipara upazila jute was cultivated on 211 hectares of land. Of those Tosha variety was cultivated on 176 hectares and local variety on 35 hectares with a production target of 1477 bales. Meanwhile, the farmers were being deprived of fair price of jute this season. A maund of Tosha variety of jute is selling in different hats and bazaars between Tk 200 to 225 and local variety between Tk 150 to 175, which is below the cost of production. Rabiane Mollah, a farmer of village Bedgram in Gopalganj Sadar upazila alleged that the jute growers were being deprived of fair price, because local jute businessmen were unwilling to purchase jute directly from the farmers. Jute traders said the price of jute was low in all the markets in the district and they were afraid of the future of jute. Mollah further said that he took an amount of Tk 12,000 for jute cultivation from a money lender this year. But he sold his produced jute only at Tk 3,000 and he lost Tk 9,000 for cultivating jute this year. On the other hand some jute growers were being compelled to sell their crops to the money lenders much before harvesting the cash crop at a very cheap rate. Moreover, there would be no government purchase centre in Gopalganj this year. The growers urged the government to fix the price of jute and open jute purchasing centres for the betterment of the jute growers.



PHOTO: STAR

Despite bumper production of jute this season, farmers in Gopalganj are being deprived of fair price of their produce. (Top left) Some growers at Gobra in Sadar upazila harvesting jute from their field while (top right) others carry jute plants in bundle to dump at a nearby pond and (bottom) two female workers separating jute from sticks after rotting green sticks in pond water. But their production cost is higher than the market price of jute.

Sylhet Municipality budget announced

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Sylhet

The Sylhet Municipality has announced its annual budget for the 2002-2003 financial year recently. Municipality chairman Badaruddin Ahmed Kamran announced the Tk. 79 cr 63 lakh budget at a simple function at the municipal auditorium. The budget showed an income of Tk 79cr 62 lakh 90 thousand and the expenditure has been shown at Tk 78cr 74 lakh 35 thousand. The major heads of income includes, Tk. 12 cr 76 lakh, Tax on handing over of immovable property-Tk 75 lakh, building construction and reconstruction-Tk 10 lakh, Business-Tk. 75 lakh, leasing of Inter-district bus terminal-Tk. 20 lakh, water supply connection and reconnection-Tk. 25 lakh, sale proceed from tender schedule and other forms- Tk 25 lakh and compensation for road cutting from different government bodies-Tk 50 lakh and water line rect-Tk. 75 lakh. The income side also showed -12 cr from the ADP assistance from the government, special allocation from government -Tk 10 cr, Nine Town Water Supply Project-Tk. 2 cr and slum development and others-Tk. 40 cr Salami for market renting-Tk. 23 cr. The main heads of expenditure includes, Education-Tk. 18 cr, Health and sanitation-Tk. one crore, street lighting, social institutions and others- Tk. one crore 20 lakh, tree plantation-Tk. 15 lakh and development expenditure from revenue

allocation-Tk. 14 cr 6 lakh. However, it was also shown that, an amount of Tk 10 cr 36 lakh has been lying unrealised as holding tax from the city dwellers for long. The municipality chairman said that it might be the last budget of Sylhet Municipality as it is being converted into a city corporation soon. A bill in this regard had already been passed in the parliament.

Youth gets RI for possessing fake notes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Nilphamari

A court in Nilphamari sentenced a young man to four years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for possessing fake currency notes. The convict was identified as Muminur Rahman, son of Sattar in the Koyagala area in Syedpur Municipality. Muminur handed over a counterfeit note of 100 taka denomination to a shopkeeper after buying some goods on December 1 in the year of 2000, according to the prosecution. Afterwards, two more fake notes were recovered from his possession. Additional District and Sessions Judge M Mukhlesur Rahman pronounced the verdict on Sunday after examining the witnesses and records.

Rice price soar in Faridpur

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Faridpur

Prices of different varieties of rice have shot up in all the markets of Faridpur town severely affecting the fixed income groups. Coarse varieties including IRR1 is selling here at Tk 13.50 a kg in place of Tk 11.50 a kg a week ago. Medium size variety Ratna is selling at Tk 15.00 a kg in place of Tk 13, Jhingashail at Tk 15.50 in place of Tk 13.50 a kg a few day ago. Fine varieties of rice Minicate is selling at Tk 18 a kg in place of Tk 15 a kg, Nazirshail at Tk 19 a kg in place of Tk 17 a kg and Kataribhog at Tk 22 a kg in place of Tk 19 a kg a couple of days back. When asked about the sudden price-hike, a rice trader of Titumir market in the town said requesting anonymity that the supply of rice from North Bengal had fallen sharply due to torrential rains last week causing the sudden price-hike of all the varieties. "Due to unscrupulous activities by some rice traders the prices of rice have gone up" said a shop-keeper of the same market. The concerned authorities should take stringent measures to keep the price of rice under control to enable the poor to survive.